

CAMP TRANS

GENDER CAMP 2000

ZINE

BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE CHICAGO
CAMP TRANS PLANNING COMMITTEE

Just fucked yr Gender.

being how something that looks

like it could fuck you up

Can change Meaning,
gender, yr feelings

Once you hear a

Number of high-

Piston Squeals and

See awkward dancers

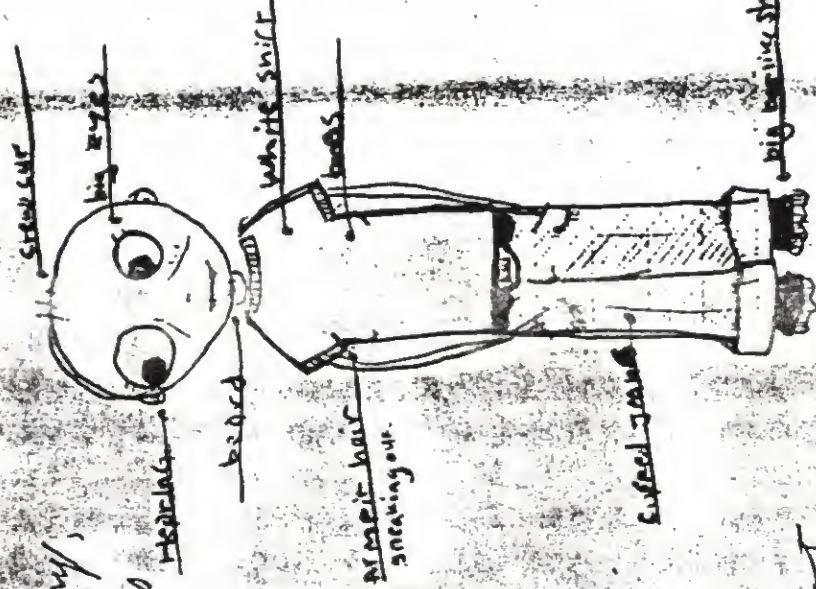
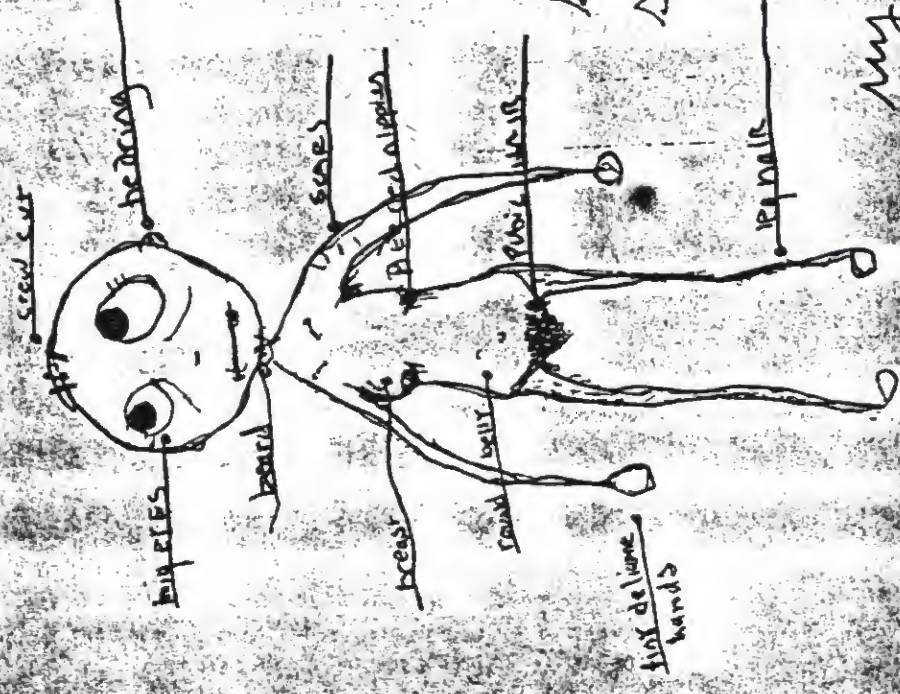
Spurred by excitement.

my appearance ds

my comfort do not

save me for granted. do not

me aside



★ FROM CT2000 ZINE

Part Bo(d)y, Part ____

Bodies. We all have them. When I was younger I didn't think about mine all that much, but that's sure changed. Some people (like me) think about their bodies all the time—they might feel like their body is too big or too small or too short or too weak or some people just feel like their body isn't their own. I think its pretty safe to say most people have somewhat complicated relationships to their bodies, especially us trans and gender-queer folks. Me, I identify as a boy, not necessarily as male, but as a boy, a queer boy, a boy whose not *only* a boy, a boy whose part something else, a boy who likes butches and dykes and boyz. A flaming boy. I know as these words press their ink to your eyes you are picturing something about what I look like, something about my body. Maybe you think you know what kind of body I have. Maybe you're wondering whether I have (either?) a cock or a cunt (both?). It means a lot for me to write this, for you not to see my body, to be able to say in your head "male" or "female" when you look at me. It means I don't have my born body, here, on this page. It means I can invent my body to you, the way I always invent my body, every day, but even more so. But this isn't all about me.

When I think about Michigan WMF, somewhere I've never been, I try to picture what it must be like, for the women there to walk around naked and feel safe, comfortable, easy. It must be an amazing feeling. To be naked and feel fully yourself, to feel you're hiding nothing, to celebrate your body. But its difficult to celebrate a body that isn't fully yours, a body that when stripped nude hides parts of you rather than revealing them. Its because of the way we think about bodies—the way we have thought about them for years here in dominant western cultures. For instance, if you're "fat", mainstream society doesn't only consider you to be unattractive, but also lazy, greedy, and slow. Your body isn't just your physical appearance, it becomes *who* people think you *are*.

If someone has tits, people assume that person wants to be called "she", or if they don't have tits, then "he". The body comes to stand in for the person, it overrides what that person does (to it) and how that person sees themselves. For example if I see myself as female and someone looks at me (actually, meaning *at my body*—see how we conflate the two!!) and the "clues" and markers all of us have learned to read on bodies (chest/breasts? shoulders? hips? genitals?), tells them I'm male, then there's a good chance that person will assume I'm "he". They will relate to me based on the body they (think they) see, even if I'm wearing something that would indicate I might not be "he". Like the way a lot of heterosexual people call drag queens by male pronouns—certain they know what's between the queen's legs, and certain that that is *the most important thing*. It's this fixation on the body, the assumption that the body is the ultimate truth, the final, "real" self, rather than considering the way a person uses their body, how that person expresses themselves on their body.

When people like the women who run Michican WMF say only "womyn-born-womyn" are welcome, they are policing bodies. They are forcing the body to stand in for the person, they are defining gender for that person, instead of honoring the complicated way someone might identify *DESPITE* what their flesh-and-blood body looks like. We need to think about bodies in a broader context. What I mean by this is considering the body not only the physical form we were born with (and sometimes never the things we were born with) but the physical things we construct, that become a part of us. We do things to our bodies, we invent them and shape them—not just trans and gender-queer folks—but everyone. When someone looks at another person, they aren't (usually) seeing that persons naked body, but one that's clothed, that's presenting itself in a certain way, that's intentional.

Things we put on our bodies *become* our bodies. If someone is tattooed, those marks are on their body, are part of their body. Grrr! who put on make up and boyz who bind and pack are changing their bodies too—even though those things can "come off". That's part of their body, and to ask that person to strip down to what most people consider "naked" is really asking that person to strip beyond nakedness. Bodies that are perceived as being changed more permanently, through surgery, get stronger reactions and are taken more seriously. This is another way of saying gender expression isn't as real as a body, that the things we put on our bodies aren't as important as our gonads or our hormones. If a trans person has taken hormones, or

undergone sex reassignment surgery (SRS), their body is likely to produce a great deal of anxiety among certain non-trans folks. People become really upset because one of the major systems that organizes our cultures and societies—binary gender—is being disrupted, and they don't know where to place that person and that body! Lots of times it's hard to tell, though, with gender-queer folks, which of us are pre-op, post-op, or non-op. People don't know what's underneath the clothing, and just judge it as freakish, unnatural, something fearsome. They become obsessed with "which" (of two options) type of genitals the person possesses. This is assuming that there are only two possibilities (there are many, many possibilities!!) that one can be born with or that one can create for themselves. **WE NEED TO START THINKING ON MORE COMPLEX TERMS.** All bodies are constructed, both by the people who live in them and by society, by history. That's part of why all this is so hard—when we're challenging the idea that a body is a self, we're challenging centuries of history, we're challenging science, medicine, things that our society regards as unwavering truth.

But everyone constructs their body intentionally, not just trans people. People dress in particular ways—that either accentuate or hide specific body parts, people wear their hair in different ways, people move in different ways. Those are ways of making a body, of constructing a self that other people look at and then decide specific things about that person. It really bothers me that the line is often drawn between transsexual bodies (considered operated or to be operated on, against nature, threatening) and non-transsexual bodies (considered natural, normal, non-threatening, and unintentional). If I was born female and have not surgically altered my body, then I can enter the gates of MWMF (assuming I have the money). But maybe this does not feel comfortable to me, because I know my having what people see as a "natural" and "safe" body relies on them seeing it and me as female, girl, woman. Does this mean I comfortably inhabit the category "woman", even if that designation may be uncomfortable or ill-fitting to me? Does it mean I need to undergo SRS in order to be considered something other than a woman? Or does the woman-born-woman policy at Michigan mean, as Minnie Bruce Pratt asks, "that if you are born female you are always a woman?" (from her book *S/HE*)

When you strip me down to nothing, that's not my body. That's what a doctor would do, a scientist—tell me I am my body, examine my body and dictate to me what it means. But I take the power to name my own body. I say my body consists of the things I put on it, the things I do to it to make it mine, to make it safer for me, to make me better able to live in it. As someone who's gender queer, my body feels best when it's incoherent. The idea of a coherent body, of a body that is at home in a gender, feels uncomfortable to me—it feels incomplete. My comfort comes in ambiguity. In using my body intentionally to express my complicated identity—my boyness, my queerness, my dykeness, my fagness.

Ari B. August, 2000.

GENDER:

MALE ☐

FEMALE ☐

FUCK YOU ☐

-Urban Barry

The reason why we are here is to convince the leadership of the festival to allow transgendered womyn on to the land. Yet, if you were to look at the participants at CampTrans, you will notice that most are, to borrow a phrase, womyn-born-womyn. They can come onto the land with no questions (And they attend and enjoy the festival) yet they are involved with the debate. Why is that?

The reasons are varied and very complex. If you were to talk to the different womyn (transgendered or otherwise) you will get different and in many cases, contradictory reason. That is because there are many ideas and causes under the transgendered issue. One of the biggest underlying ideas is the very definition of being a womyn.

Right here I will admit to painting with a broad brush but please bear with me. MWMF was founded during the mid 70's, a time when not only were most men were hostile to lesbian events, so were many straight womyn (That is not to say that is not the case now.). It took a lot of courage to get events like this going and to keep it going. One of the ideas that was put forth was the idea the traits that were called feminine were what made womyn weak were actually the superior traits. There was not a change in how womyn were defined, just a change in how these traits were perceived. This helped to create an environment where young womyn had more freedom to explore gender, both male and female, and to pick and choose how they would like to express themselves. Now you have young womyn who act in ways that the older lesbians have hard time relating to. What we have are different generations who actually have had different experiences coming out. The older lesbians had to create on the fly the systems that we now have. The younger dykes were able to benefit from these actions. Sadly, some of the older lesbians feel threatened by the changes they were able to make while the younger dykes feel that the older lesbians are a bit too inflexible. We need to work past this. There are too many good womyn on both sides of the debate to keep us divided.

Back to the main point, the womyn in CampTrans are the daughters of the founders of MWMF. They have no desire to destroy all of the effort that went into the maintaining the event. They just desire that all of the unresolved questions about gender to be addressed. That is no small task. If anything, it is messy, frustrating, contradictory, elusive and maddening. But trying to work this out will be much better than calling each other names.

I ask that anyone who is interested in trying to resolve this to come to CampTrans and talk. Speaking only for myself, I would love to talk about the reason for the fears and how to get around them. All of us on both sides deserve nothing less.

Janine Kelley

Glossary

TRANS - someone who feels the categories "female" or "male" or the gender they were assigned at birth does not adequately describe their lived gender identity.

BIO - biological, born gender. Used before boy/girl (bio boy/bio girl). Refers to a person whose lived gender identity corresponds with gender identity assigned at birth.

FtM - someone born "female" who now identifies as "male."

MtF - someone born "male" who now identifies as "female."

SEX does not equal GENDER.

SEX - sex assigned at birth. Science and society has demanded that there are only two sexes. But that is a lie.

GENDER - socially and culturally constructed identity often mistaken as a synonym of sex. But that is also a lie. Gender is learned, worn, often fluid and is not necessarily permanent.

BINARY - two terms set up in opposition to one another - male/female, black/white, east/west; is used to oversimplify and divide and is used to maintain the certain dominant social order.

OUT THE GLOSSARY:

to come up with this glossary to ~~help~~ make communication even though a lot of us felt torn or uncomfortable with the small group of folks DEFINING THINGS FOR EVERYONE ELSE, not having at least somewhat of a common language or basis to work from would be useful. So basically we are negotiable--so let's talk about that.

Press RELEASE FROM GenderPac After CT 2000

[HART, MI : 12 Aug 00] EIGHT YOUNG ATTENDEES, variously identifying as transnie boys, boydyke, FTM, and lesbian were evicted from the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival (MWMF) this Saturday evening after they refused to meet the Festival's "womyn-born womyn only" policy. The eight were members of an ad-hoc Chicago group called the "Camp Trans Planning Committee" and the Boston and Chicago chapters of the Lesbian Avengers.

More than 60 gender activists from these groups plus members of Transsexual Menace, supportive attendees, and renowned activist Dana Rivers gathered across the road from the Festival this year to do outreach and education on what they viewed as a discriminatory policy being unfairly applied. Said one, "Half the women in there are butch, boy, or, or FTM identified and wouldn't be able to say they were 'womyn-born womyn' if asked."

Past evictions had focused narrowly on transgender women and the eight's expulsion marks the first time the "womyn-born womyn only" policy has been used against transnie boys, boydykes, FTM's, Lesbian Avengers and young gender-variant women. It was widely viewed by most observers as turning a new page in the escalating conflict over the policy's application.

As thousands of attendees looked on during dinner in the Festival's huge dining area, the young activists held aloft signs declaring themselves a variety of identities, including "boy," "FTM," "intersex," "drag queen," and "transwoman." When they called for diners to join them in a public show of support, more than three hundred stepped forward to stand with them for almost an hour before Festival Security arrived to evict them.

Security escorted the eight to the Main Gate, cut off their attendance wristbands, refused their request for refunds, and expelled them from the grounds.

Their action was a direct challenge to Festival owner Lisa Vogel's latest attempt to clarify the policy widely criticized as vague and misleading: a flier handed out at the entrance which threatened that any attendee who "self-declared" as an FTM or MTF transsexual or otherwise not being "a womyn-born womyn" would be refused a ticket and face involuntary expulsion.

The new statement was viewed by many as amounting to "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," and indeed, at noon on Friday as four police officers apparently summoned by the Festival watched on amid scores of attendees, one transgender woman who openly identified herself was denied entrance while several others who did not identify themselves were allowed to buy tickets and enter. By prior agreement, none were among those who held signs and risked eviction.

But all were from among sixty mostly-young gender activists with names like Casey, Gunner, and Jack who variously identified as boyz, andros, transnie boys, lesbian, bi, FTM, girlz, boychick, femme, stone-but, or simply "queer" who held a series of workshops and discussion groups on the "Don't Ask Don't Tell" gender policy. This year's "Camp Trans" culminated in a live music show with lights, sound, and stage set up by Chicago-based "Camp Trans Planning Committee."

The Festival's first expulsion occurred in 1991 when attendee Nancy Burkholder and a friend were both forcibly evicted after she identified herself in a workshop as a transgender woman.

Since then, in 1993, '94, and '99 gender activists, Avengers and members of Transsexual Menace have camped out on public property across from the Festival's Main Gate to hold "Camp Trans," this year more inclusively also called "GenderCamp 2000."

Said one activist, "Vogel's policy towards transsexuals is now the same as the US military's towards homosexuals. But 'Don't Ask Don't Tell' only works when the target group collaborates by remaining silent. Well, we aren't silent. We don't identify as 'womyn-born womyn' -- we don't know what it even means or why it should be used against us or our transnie

THURSDAY:

(AUG. 9TH)

1PM - OPEN MIC

FRIDAY:

(AUG. 10TH)

1PM - TRANSFEMINISM (stacey and katie/scout)

3PM - SIZE ISSUES, GENDER ISSUES (ruth and brenna)

4PM - GENDERFUCK DRESSUP (ruth and margaret)

6PM - VIGIL (on the land-mainstage area)

8PM - DRAGSHOW and DANCE PARTY

SATURDAY:

(AUG. 11TH)

1PM - FEMME WORKSHOP (ruth, mckay, margaret)

2PM - INDIE MeDiA (simon, mckay, ruth)

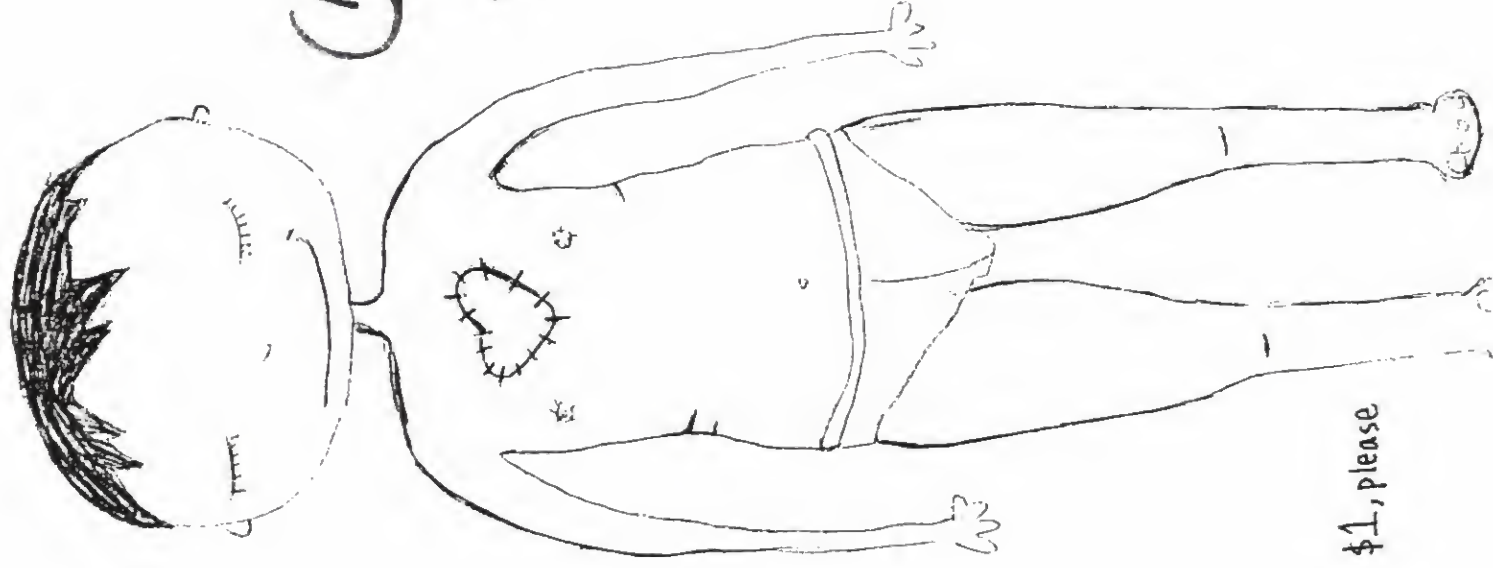
3PM - WOMEN ONLY SPACE - IS IT REALLY A SAFESPACE?
(gunner and the boston lesbian avengers)

4PM - WHAT ELSE IS FUCKED UP ABOUT MIC HIGAN? (simon)

5PM - MUSIC (emily white, three cheers for becky, stardeth, scott free)

SUNDAY:

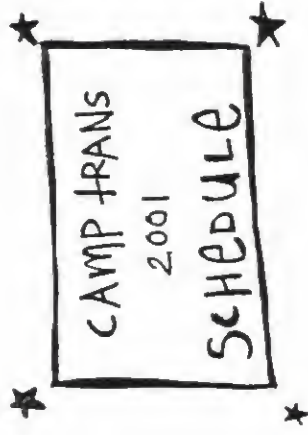
(AUG. 12TH)



CAMP+TRANS

★ 2001 ★

\$1, please



1 Come to Camp Trans!

It is and welcome to our zine. To attempt to narrow down every Camp Trans member's notion about what this introduction should say would be an impossible task. Lots of people ask us, "What exactly do you want?" Well, we'd all like to be safe in the places we want to be in. And those of us that want to be at MWMF should be able to go if they want to, and be there without fear of violence or harassment. We think that folks should be able to do that. And some people don't want to be involved with Fest, and are at Camp Trans to experience the all-inclusive, hopefully more safe, accepting and welcoming party politics that we hope to create this year. Oh, and the whole "not allowed to go in" part, due to gender identification, "sex at birth," lack of \$300 dollars if you're over 16 to spend in the forests, or a whole other range of things.

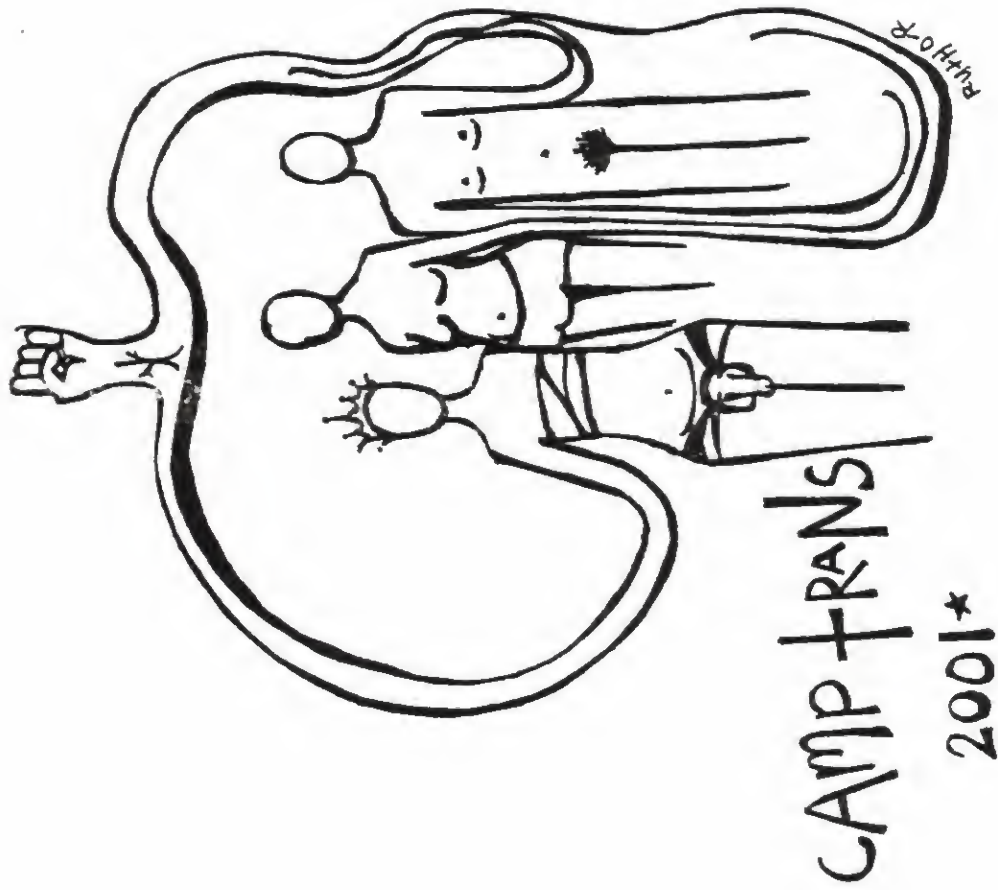
We may have different ideas and opinions about what Camp Trans is all about, but we are definitely here to spread awareness about the trans-phobic "womyn-born-womyn only" policy of the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival. There will workshops, discussions, music, food ALL FOR FREE, to spread the word about why we're here. And we want to start new dialogues about trans-inclusion and identity, and maybe the beginnings of starting a whole new festival, away from MWMF. We are inviting the decision-makers of the Fest to come talk with us. We would like to go to where you are and discuss, but you won't let us in. This makes negotiations quite difficult.

So for the brief history of Camp Trans - in 1994 or so, one transwoman (whose name we really shouldn't be using without her permission) got kicked out of the fest when she was outed to security. So the year after, friends of hers started Camp Trans in protest of this. Other folks picked up the call in 1999 and have continued it in the years since. Last year, about 10 of us were kicked out when we came out as a motley crew of non womyn born-womyn folks to the security guards after buying tickets one sunny Saturday afternoon. We did this for several reasons. Some of the people that got kicked off were female-born-males (FTM), and were removed for being "men." Therefore, transitioning to the "other" gender is possible. So, if a "woman" can become a "man," then a "man" can become a "woman," which should allow her to enter the fest. Also, this proves that one of us may look enough like a "woman" to easily buy a ticket, and roam about the land in the closet about our trans identity without any trouble. Not to mention the other MTF, girlflags, boydykes, intersexed, and genderqueers amongst us. But once we come out, we are all of a sudden a danger to the very fabric of the festival. Don't Ask. Don't Tell in full effect.

So transfolks, both female-to-male (FTM) and male-to-female (MTF), as well as many other genderqueer people, can't talk about their trans identity. Imagine substituting the word "trans" with Lesbian, or Latina, or differently abled. What if you couldn't come out at the Fest? Would you feel safe there?

Everyone's welcome to leave the Fest and come hang out with us, to stay or go back, to perform, to ask questions, or share some food. By all means come see the shows and participate in the Candlelight Vigil in remembrance of victims of anti-trans violence. The next pages will be filled with the art, words and ideas of Camp Trans participants and friends. Please take time to read what we have to say, and come say hi across the road.

Simon and Casey (the fabulous T-b-y cousins), July 30, 11pm Logan Square Chicago



CAMP TRANS

2001*

★ FROM
CT 2001
ZINE

MMMF Fact Sheet

<http://www.buthdykeboy.com>

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A few things you may not know about the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival:

- 1) The "womyn-born-womyn only" policy was created about 15 years ago in response to pressure from trans people and their allies. There are TONS of trans people that attend the festival every year, but risk being thrown out if they "reveal" their identity.
- 2) Because of the high costs and segregationist policies of MMWF, many women including mothers, women of color, folks who practice BDSM and working class and poor women do not or cannot attend.
- 3) The Michigan Womyn's Music Festival is a FOR PROFIT INSTITUTION. The sole owner is Lisa Vogel. This information was found out by simply calling the MMWF phone line. No matter how many people want change, it is her final decision. At MMWF, MONEY TALKS! How much do you think it costs to put on the fest? Where does the rest go?

THANKS, THANKS, and more thanks to:

simon strikeback, dee, ruth, McKay, casey
margaret, josh, anne, Kate, jeff, gnat, eli, linda, m~~ax~~,
rachel, gunner, stacey, all the boston kids, all the rockin'
contributors, everyone who showed up to CT, and everyone
else who helped out along the way.

pronoun theory.

i question the accuracy and necessity of gender-specific pronouns in communication. if someone's gender is identified and communicated through other signifiers as they choose, and we are sensitive enough to other people's gender identities to pay attention to the gender they wish to be perceived as, are "accurate" male and female pronouns needed? we need something to break up the awkwardness of pronounless speech (*sam went to the store. sam got some plums in aisle one and sam got spinach in aisle two. sam waited in line to pay. then sam went home.*), but do pronouns truly need to match up to the appropriate gender?

i advocate destroying gendered pronouns altogether. *sam went to the store. he got some plums in aisle one and she got spinach in aisle two. he waited in line to pay. then she went home.* it takes no meaning out of what is being communicated, nor does it invalidate the gender identity of the subject. for people whose gender identities have been consistently disregarded or misunderstood by others, i realize that the idea of being referred to with pronouns that don't match their genders could feel somewhat negative. it is necessary that we are *actively* conscious of the pronouns we use to reference others, not making assumptions about anyone's gender identity/pronoun preference and consciously changing our speech patterns once we are aware of someone's preference. i am speaking idealistically, because it isn't fair to ask anyone to give up their gendered pronouns until they feel their gender is truly recognized, but it is something to consider.

i find bigendered/nongendered pronouns (s/he, hir, et cetera) to be clumsy and limiting. though they might be recognized within small parts of the queer community, they are not understood by most people, and thus cut off a great deal of needed communication about trans identity and politics with those who have no base understanding of the issues involved. i don't feel like they create a solution in or out of the queer community.

if we can teach ourselves to validate people's genders by honestly validating them, rather than simply shifting our language for the sake of politeness, gendered pronouns would not longer be a valid or necessary means of communicating or limiting gender. (ruth oppenheim-rothschild.)



The links to all these documents can be found on
<http://www.michfest.com/Updates/policy.htm>

Michigan Womyn's Music Festival
Aug 8-13, 2000
What's a Festival Without a Controversy?

For a quarter century, the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival has been a magnet for the debates and disputes of the larger feminist and lesbian communities. This year was no different, as the Festival was the scene of a protest demonstration by a group of activists calling themselves "Camp Trans Y2K" (CTY2K).

The hallmark of Michigan has always been its creation of separate, self-defined and honored womyn's space. A flier developed through weeks of dialogue in the worker community and distributed to all festival-goers stated, "For one week a year, the Festival provides a space for us to gather as womyn who were born as, and have lived our entire life experience as womyn. This is a rare and precious community that we share for this week, and as Festival organizers we feel that one of the important ingredients in this community is that we have shared our entire life experience - however varied that may be - as womyn."

CTY2K activists expressed their opposition to the Festival's womyn-born womyn focus from Forest Service land across the road from the Festival's front gate. On Friday and Saturday, August 11 - 12, a group of about 25 activists entered the Festival and caused a series of small disruptions.

Festival staff - representing a mix of butch, femme and other womyn across a gender-identity continuum, most active in trans-ally work - met the group at the gate and distributed copies of the Festival's policy statement, which included a request that the transsexual community respect and support womyn-born womyn space and provided explicit notice that individuals who self-declared as male-to-female transsexuals or female-to-male transsexuals might be denied entrance or asked to leave.

Despite provocation from the activists throughout the two days, Festival staff held firm to their commitment that no one's gender or sex would be questioned on the land. If an individual clearly self-declared as a male-to-female or female-to-male transsexual during the course of the protest action, they were asked to leave. As a result of this clearly and repeatedly articulated policy, the wrist tickets of 4 individuals were removed. Their money was not refunded, consistent with the Festival's policy that no refunds are provided after July 6th.

"Michigan has always been home to womyn-born womyn who represent every point along the continuum of gender identity: from butch to femme and beyond butch and femme, including many who consider themselves transgendered. We remain committed to providing space for womyn-born womyn to gather in celebration of our diverse identities as womyn-born womyn," says Festival organizer Lisa Vogel.

"It saddens me that the young womyn we used to call 'baby-dykes' are now growing up questioning the validity of the very concept of being female. Many of us growing up, myself included, struggled fiercely with the limited societal definition of what being a 'woman' meant. That's why we created this Festival -- as an exploration and celebration of the full range of how we are and all we can be as womyn. We refuse to see "woman" turned into a dirty word or defined as an out-dated construct.

"The Michigan Womyn's Music Festival remains clear and firm in our commitment to maintain the Festival as womyn-born womyn space. At the same time, we stand as allies with the trans community and refuse to be forced into false dichotomies that equate being pro-womyn-born womyn space with being anti-trans.

"We believe the greater queer community is strong enough to support separate space for all affinity groups. There are times all oppressed communities need separate spaces, even away from their allies. The Festival community learned this in the creation of a separate and honored Womyn of Color space. We call upon the transsexual community to respect and support the community at Michigan, which by its very definition is separate space for womyn-born womyn."

(this is the press release that was given out just before mich in 2000)
For Immediate Release- July 24, 2000 Contact: Lisa Vogel- 231.989.3707
Michigan Womyn's Music Festival Affirms Womyn-Born Womyn Space

The Michigan Womyn's Music Festival is the largest and longest running womyn's Festival in the United States. This week-long camping event in Northern Michigan celebrates womyn's culture, community and ingenuity. With over 6,000 womyn attending annually from every U.S. state, Canadian province and over 30 other countries, the Festival acts as a petri-dish in which the popular discussions of the lesbian community are incubated. For 25 years Michigan has been in large part defined by the politics that are woven into the infrastructure of this city of womyn in the woods. The hallmark of Michigan has always been its creation of separate, self-defined and deeply honored womyn's space.

From its earliest days, the Festival was described as "A Gathering of Mothers and Daughters for Womyn-Born Womyn" (1978 promotional flier). Now in its 25th year, the Festival continues to claim the right and the responsibility to state clearly that the Michigan Festival is intended for womyn-born womyn. This is defined as individuals who were born as womyn, and have lived their entire life experience as womyn, and currently identify as womyn.

The Festival has always been home to many womyn who would be considered gender outlaws, either because of their sexual orientation (lesbian, bisexual, polyamorous, etc.) or their gender presentation (butch, bearded, androgynous, femme - and every combination or permutation in between). The essence of the Festival is that it is one week a year that is by, for and about the glorious diversity of womyn-born womyn.

It is a powerful, uncommon experience that womyn enjoy during this week of living in the company of other womyn-born womyn. There are many opportunities in the larger world to share space with the entire queer community, and many spaces that welcome all who define themselves as female. In the year 2000, the queer community represents such rich diversity that there surely is room for all affinity groups to enjoy separate, self-determined, supportive space if they choose. The queer community is strong enough to hold our incredible diversity with mutual respect and support.

There are many divergent viewpoints on the larger gender discussion happening in the queer community. Many of the womyn essential to the Michigan Festival are leaders and supporters in trans-solidarity work and the broader LGBT movement. The Michigan Womyn's Music Festival supports this larger discussion, and values and respects the transsexual community as integral members of the broader queer community. We call upon the transsexual community in turn to respect and support womyn-born womyn space.

Part of an article posted on the MWMF web sight:
"A Taste of What We Know is Possible"

Talk to the performers and it becomes clear that this is a place deeply committed to women's creativity. According to Krissy Keefer, founder of the Wallflower Order/ Dance Brigade, "Michigan embodies a profound commitment to the artist; no other festival does it like this one." The all-woman sound, light and stage crews rival the technical excellence of production crews anywhere, according to Michigan performers.

It's a place committed to social change, not just in the world outside, but in the way the Festival itself is produced. Casselberry, who along with Keefer directs the Festival's annual opening celebration, says "As an African American musician, I can say there's no other festival like this out there. We've done years of work to integrate women of color into this festival at all levels, and credit is due on all sides. Now when new women of color come onto the scene, they're chomping at the bit to come back."

But in a world where institutional control is still in male hands, perhaps the most defining characteristic of the Michigan Festival is its commitment to - for one week a year - an experience created and enjoyed solely by women.

Holly Near, in a retrospective of women's music on Saturday Acoustic Stage, described the Festival as a space that "allows us to understand who we are apart from male energy, apart from the dominant culture. It has always been essential to have phases of separatism so that deaf people can understand who they are apart from hearing people, that black people can understand who they want to be apart from white people, that women can understand who we want to be apart from men, and the list goes on."

Since its founding, the Festival has come under attack for creating a separate space, however temporary, for women to gather. Says producer Lisa Vogel, who started the Festival when she was 19 years old, "we've always had to explain that it's not about excluding anyone; it's about including women." Today's critique comes not from conservative men but from young "gender activists" who question the validity of the term woman.

About 25 of these activists, calling themselves "Camp Trans," staged a demonstration at the Festival's Main Kitchen on Saturday. [See [sidebar](#).] Festival organizers responded by affirming "Michigan has always been home to women who represent every point along the continuum of gender identity: from butch to femme and beyond butch and femme, including many who consider themselves transgendered. The Michigan Womyn's Music Festival remains clear and firm in our commitment to maintain the Festival as womyn-born womyn space where we gather in celebration of our diverse identities as womyn-born womyn."

(this was put together by the festival workers)

Michigan Womyn's Music Festival

Aug 8-13, 2000

Community Discussion on Womyn-Born Womyn Space

As we head into the 2000 Festival with the prospect of a "CampTransY2K," we thought a concise overview of the issues at hand along with the current working plan would be helpful. While we don't know what to expect with this year's Camp Trans, we offer this working paper in the hopes that we can come together as a community to pull in the same direction as we create this year's 25th Anniversary Festival. We recognize that there is great diversity of opinions and feelings on this issue. Ours is a community built upon feminist principles; **we believe that we are big enough to hold our diversity of opinion with respect and love.** We will lay the groundwork for the larger community that will join us soon; if we move forward with unified trust it will have a positive effect on the Festival as a whole.

1. The Festival Community, in large part, supports the womyn-born womyn policy:
 - The majority of festie-feedback from last year's Festival was in support of the policy.
 - Most of the postings on the www.michfest.com discussion board are in support of the policy. (Support for Michigan's policy is also frequently voiced on the CampTrans website by both transmen, transwomen, and trans-allies who believe that womyn-born womyn space is not inherently anti-trans.)
 - After extensive clarification of the policy at last year's Festival (including a written statement distributed at the Festival and reprinted in Lesbian Connection), a community of workers - this community of workers - chose to return to a Festival defined as womyn-born womyn space.
 - 7,000 festies are en route to a Festival known and defined as womyn-born womyn space.
2. It's also clear that there are differences of opinion within our community about the policy:
 - Some of us would like to explore, in a non-reactive dialogue, whether Michigan's definition of womyn-only space can broaden to incorporate trans inclusion.
 - Some of us want to reaffirm Michigan's commitment to womyn-born womyn's space.
 - Some of us would like to lay the subject to rest and not spend any more time or energy on it.
3. Beyond differences over the policy, members of our community have a broad range of perspectives on the larger TS issue:
 - Some of us are trans-identified and some are active in trans-ally work. And as in any community, some members are trans-phobic (in the classic definition of fear/hatred or denial of the existence of the "other," often based in a lack of information or familiarity).
 - Some of us want to separate the behavior of specific trans-activists from the larger discussion of identity and policy. Some favor an academic/theoretical discussion, some want a political/ ideological discussion; for some the discussion is highly personal.
 - These issues touch a tender spot for many of us in our own gender experience, for masculine/ butch/ gender ambiguous womyn whose gender identity is the target of societal hostility, and for all of us who've had restrictive gender roles imposed on us. Some of us believe that being lesbian is in itself a trans identity as we don't "behave" as womyn are expected to in a patriarchal culture.
4. Underneath all of these perspectives lies a common thread of fear - and its big sister, anger:
 - For many of us, fear and anger over what feels like the triumph of sexism and misogyny: the obliteration of who we are as womyn; that "woman" is no longer seen as a valid identity, but as something mutable.
 - For some of us, fear and anger over the loss felt on the community and personal level of the dykes who no longer identify as womyn.
 - For those who support a trans inclusive policy, and whose internal conflict with the womyn-born womyn policy means they may choose to leave, and - for those for whom womyn-born womyn space is essential to their experience of Michigan - fear of losing this beloved community.

trans action

a zine



How Complex Am I?

I wonder if I identify as "woman" because it fits me best out of two entirely inadequate options. I have explored some other more complex identities. For now, I have settled on grrrl-with-a-dick. Far better than "trans* woman." For me, I search for an identity that feels more like "home." This one is really quite comfortable (usually), but it is the most comfortable? I don't know, so far. Is it better to be "person" or a sixty word explanation of all the nuances of my gender? I guess it depends. My identity need not be forever. Today, I am grrrl-with-a-dick; next Tuesday, just grrrl. Who knows what else I can be? But it doesn't make me any less "grrrl." I can be anything and everything at once. Why do I must I search for a "forever" identity? I suppose because it is safe. I am scared to have people ignore the grrrl I am. If I walk the streets dressed "like a boy," and I'm not seen as a grrrl... How can I repair the damage done to the grrrl part of me by that denial? But why should I deny the grrrl-who-dresses- "like a boy" in me? As I struggle to be seen as me, it is easiest if they see me the same all the time... But not best. I must be the best grrrl... grrrl-with-a-dick... trans* woman... genderfucker...???

all writing by kuu

to invert or not to invert?

it seems like every day lately i struggle w/ the concept of surgery. do i want it? is it worth it? why do i want it? i never used to question it now i'm not sure i am a womyn regardless. having established that i can finally weigh the pros & cons fairly. i must admit that i'm leaning away from surgery. the cost, the danger. i might not even be able to cum. i do i not want my grrldick? am i after a cunt to validate my feelings in the eyes of other transies to other womyn? something i think so. it is really important to me that if i do this, i do it for the right reason: b/c i want to. & i don't think i do. i don't hafta fit in yr box, so why cut anything off just cuz it'd hang out? fuck hierarchies & labels earned on the basis of my ability to endure pain & pay money. i'm a womyn NOW.

Inclusion. Acceptance. Tolerance.

These words didn't mean a thing to me a few years ago. I discovered their importance to me when I first came out in high school and started attending queer youth groups and becoming friends with fellow lesbian and gay teenagers. I was finding a place in the world that I finally felt comfortable and yes, accepted in, though much of the rest of the world (i.e., high school) had a big problem with me. By then I was already used to being the odd one out – the Asian tomboy who stood quietly on the sidelines. I found solace in the queer community and the importance of being different, and how that was seemingly nurtured and accepted within the community. I thought the queer community was a near perfect source for good politics and friends. It was the embodiment of what I believed I was.

I was entranced with the queer community and lived idyllically in it for a few months until I dove deeper into its society and learned that what I had once believed was far from the truth. Slowly and quite depressingly, I realized how scarred the gay and lesbian community was with bigotry, racism, sizeism, classism, ageism, and bisexual and trans phobias. The most obvious thing I recognized was the emphasis on being either a gay man *or* a lesbian, and later on, a homogenized, straight-acting and –looking one at that. I found that being different from those in the gay and lesbian community was looked down upon and was an embarrassing and trivial segment of the queer population, in their eyes. An example could be taken from HRC's ENDA act, which was a proposed bill to combat employment and workplace discrimination for lesbians and gays. The sheer fact that transgender and transsexual people (most obviously those discriminated against most severely) were completely left out of ENDA.

This is coming from me – a dyke, an Asian American, a tomboy, a feminist, a youth, a member of the queer community who believes in political activism, that change is needed everywhere, especially in the places in which we feel most comfortable and places in which we most identify. I still feel like my friends and I are not accepted and included in larger queer events and political actions. Yes, the words bisexual and transgender are being added to the acronyms of prominent queer groups, but that seems more the politically correct thing to do rather than acknowledge, confront, and change issues and inequities particular to the B and/or T communities.

This is what seems so simple to me, that people need to educate themselves through building friendships and grasping their prejudices and turning them around, by opening their minds and opening up their own community. The concept of trans-inclusion fits in with everything else – with breaking down gender norms, combating racism, sexism, and all other injustices prevalent in society. A group of people (namely, the GLBT community) must be able to resolve their own inter-group issues before they can go out into the world and create larger scale change. The transgender community is bursting, and it is probably the most inclusive and broad segment of the queer population; it doesn't deal with sexuality in so much that it concerns societal gender rules and norms, and their subsequent destruction. The freedom and safety to express one's own gender is so very essential to the queer community that it boggles my mind of the terrible trans-phobia apparent within many of the community's members. It is time to change this, to move forward from excluding and intimidating the transgender and transsexual members of our community.

It seems to me the gay and lesbian community is embracing the cultural move to become more straight-acting and –looking rather than embracing the roots of the queer movement, of the drag queens, the butches and femmes of Stonewall, of the freedom of true self-expression. That was what it was all about, right? To be who you are, to dress the way you want, to express your sexuality safely and openly, to transcend gender roles and sexual roles of the larger society. Trans-exclusion today is a complete slap in the face to how the queer movement began.

And the sheer desire to have my friends at my side, feeling safe and included, at any queer event whether it's the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival, a queer bar, a show, a political gathering, or even an HRC event, needs to become reality. It is the key in uniting our community.

My friends and I are transgender, transsexual, bisexual, nelly and butch, boy dykes, young punks who lean toward anarchism and the radical left. We are artists and activists, we have open minds and want to create good and constructive change in the world. We have goals and desires and we want to realize them. We live what we believe and we fight for what we believe. Trans-inclusion is very important to us and vital to the survival and growth of our very lives, our community, and the future.

Thank you for reading this, for attending the trans forum, and for thinking seriously about trans-inclusion.

Linda Oh
thesehands@hotmail.com

The simplicity of my body, doesn't compare to the depth of my mind. I am Divine.

Divine in a way that I mystify

In a way that many, even those who could somewhat relate to me don't wanna see.

Divine in a way that I have rooms with people, without myopic minds call me "he."

Gender... Stereotypes. I can not conform

Dd42 breast and a dick in hand, both I adore. I could never be what you want me to be.

Binary system, he says he doesn't go by, but because I'm femine, wear dresses, corsets and identify as "he," I'm not a man to him cause I'm not on T.

Not respectin' my wishes, respectin' me

That's not cool when you call by she, rather than the asked pronoun he.

What if I called you she?

Fuck all of you and your oppressive ways. You are not my god. nor am I your slave. I may wallow in my tears from your selfish, uprightious ass, telling me I'm never enuff all of these years. But I hope soon, when you are past your "issues," You'll see the river you've caused to drown yourself.

The system you live by seems to me, to be one if truly looked at wouldn't even classify you as "he."

The compromise and contortion of my clit is more t in your corrosive mind could ever lift your dick.

But to all who look upon their own definitions of self and appreciate others for what they are, not depending on previous exclusive, narrow paths, I say you are Divine.

Divine in a way to not assume. Divine in a way to take in new knowledge and consume. Divine, indirect, presumptions demolished, with an expectance of a new base. Divine to except where I stand, where we should be.

[DEAR PROFESSOR SCHUSTER,

THIS IS THE FEMINISM YOU TEACH; BUT
IT'S NOT THE FEMINISM I BELIEVE IN.]

ON MY QUEER STUDIES FINAL EXAM, MY ULTRA-SECOND WAVE FEMINIST PROFESSOR INCLUDED THE TERM "MICHIGAN WOMYN'S MUSIC FESTIVAL" AND ASKED FOR HER STUDENTS TO DEFINE IT. SINCE I HADN'T STUDIED FOR THE TEST, I HESITATED A BIT. THEN I WROTE: "AN ALL WOMYN FESTIVAL IN EARLY AUGUST DEVELOPED TO PROMOTE SISTERHOOD." A STANDARD ANSWER THAT HER LESBIAN SEPARATIST ASS WOULD HAVE EATEN UP. BUT, OF COURSE, I WASN'T DONE. I ADDED, "THEY ALSO DON'T ALLOW PEOPLE WHO IDENTIFY AS TRANSGENDERED TO PARTICIPATE." I HANDED IN THE FINAL AND WENT HOME FOR THE SUMMER, UNSURE IF I HAD EVEN PASSED THE CLASS. BUT, I RECEIVED AN ENVELOPE WITH NO RETURN ADDRESS LATER INTO THE SUMMER. I WAS THOROUGHLY SURPRISED TO FIND MY GRADED EXAM SENT BACK TO ME. I BARELY PASSED AND THERE WAS OBVIOUSLY NOTHING CONGRATULATORY ABOUT THIS PACKAGE. HOWEVER, NEXT TO MY MWMF DEFINITION SHE WROTE THE FOLLOWING: "THEY ALLOW TRANS IN NOW." I SAT THERE, STARING AT THE TEST AND WONDERING WHERE THE FUCK SHE GETS THE AUDACITY, WITH ALL HER YEARS OF FEMINIST TEACHING AND QUEER RIGHTS, TO THINK THAT SILENCE IS THE ANSWER AND THAT THE FESTIVAL'S ANTI-TRANS "DON'T ASK DON'T TELL" POLICY IS INDEED GENEROUS AND JUST. FOR MY PROFESSOR TO THINK THAT IT'S OK FOR TRANS KIDS TO GO TO THE FESTIVAL IF THEY ARE QUIET ABOUT THEIR IDENTITY AND DON'T BOTHER HER COMFORTABLE COMMUNITY, CLEARLY SHOWS THAT SHE NEEDS TO WAKE THE FUCKUP.

THIS FESTIVAL, SUPPOSEDLY SET UP IN THE NAME OF PROMOTING SISTERHOOD, WORKS ONLY FOR THOSE WHITE SECOND WEVERS NOT WANTING TO CHANGE. THEY ESTABLISHED THIS FESTIVAL TO MAKE A SAFE PLACE FOR THEMSELVES. WHEREAS THE UNCHANGING, BUT AGING WHITE WOMEN REVEL IN THEIR FEELINGS OF RACISM AND TRANSPHOBIA, WOMEN OF COLOR AND THOSE WHO ARE TRANS-IDENTIFIED FEEL OUT OF PLACE AND ANYTHING BUT SAFE. AND THE "DON'T ASK DON'T TELL" POLICY IS SET UP TO MAINTAIN THEIR SAFE SPACE, SINCE THESE WHITE WOMEN AREN'T LOOKING TO BE CHALLENGED, BUT REAFFIRMED IN THEIR BELIEFS. SAFE SPACES BENEFIT THOSE WHO DON'T WANT TO FUCKING CHANGE. (SAFE SPACES DON'T FUCKING WORK.) AND THESE COMFORTABLE WHITE WOMEN, SO OUTSPOKEN IN THEIR MINDS, WANT TO KEEP TRANS WOMEN, GENDERFUCKS, TRANNY BOYS, ETC.. QUIET SO THEY CAN REMAIN COMFORTABLE WITH THEIR INHERENTLY PROBLEMATIC BELIEFS.

[NO MORE.]

AND THIS CYCLE IS SICKENING... A HUGE SUPPORTER AND PARTICIPANT OF THE MWMF DECIDES TO TAKE A JOB TEACHING WOMEN'S STUDIES AT AN ALL "GIRLS" COLLEGE. SHE REMAINS IN HER COMFORTABLE PLACE FOR DECADES IN A DECADENT WHITE LESBIAN COMMUNITY. SHE DOESN'T KNOW ANY TRANS-KIDS(OR AT LEAST DOESN'T THINK SO) AND KINDA THINKS THAT THE WHOLE THING IS "WEIRD" AND TRANS-WOMEN AREN'T REAL WOMEN AND TRANS-BOYS ARE JUST GIVING INTO THE

PATRIARCHY AND THOUGH SHE DOESN'T SAY THIS OUT LOUD ANYMORE, SHE TRIES TO IGNORE THE SUBJECT AND NOT GIVE IT SUPPORT IN ANY OF HER CLASSES. AND THEN SOME OF HER STUDENTS FALL IN THAT COMFORTABLE PLACE IN THIS PRIMARILY WHITE ALL "GIRLS" SCHOOL AND THINK LIKE HER AND THEY DON'T REALLY UNDERSTAND THIS WHOLE "WEIRD" TRANSGENDER THING AND THEY WRITE ON THE BATHROOM STALLS "IF YOU WANNA BE A BOY WHY DID YOU GO TO AN ALL GIRLS SCHOOL?" AND DON'T HOPE FOR AN ANSWER. BUT JUST MORE SILENCE (THEY DON'T WANT TO BE CHALLENGED). AND THIS GOES ON FOR YEARS UNTIL IT'S THANKFULLY DISRUPTED BY YOU AND ME.

LURAN BARRY



I have to be honest, Going to a womyn-born-womyn event is not high on my list of concerns. I went to CampTrans 2000 to support my friends and allies. I think that womyn only events are needed; it is just, for obvious reasons, my definition of womyn is more inclusive than the definition of the owners of MWMF. I am sympathetic for where they are coming from, I just think they are wrong on the point of trans inclusion. I was hoping to act in the role of peace keeper, I wanted to mediate. Obviously, the change for that did not happen.

Yet CampTrans 2000 was worth the time for me. I met a lot of womyn who came off the land in order to talk. I learned a lot about the various politics on the land and about issues that I was not aware of. I met some workers who wished us well and some womyn who said they opposed us in the past but were now supportive. In the process, I met a lot of interesting womyn and some of my friendships became deeper. I left the camp discouraged in some ways but hopeful that progress can still be made.

Then I made the mistake of paying attention to the trans debate on both the CampTrans and the Michigan website. It is amazing how much time fearful and hateful people spend showing their fear and hate. For a while, I was going to respond to every point made but I finally realized that other womyn were trying to do the same thing. They were treated with distrust or were ignored. This was not a discussion, very few of the womyn posting were listening. So, under better conditions, I shall address some of the issues that were posted.

1) One post-op womyn suggested that all of us (including herself) take five years off and work on womyn's issues, then come back.

Womyn do not need to perform deeds in order to prove they are womyn. Are festies asked what they have volunteered for? This is not to be defensive because I am willing to disclose what I work on, which are both womyn's and trans issues.

2) Post-op womyn that were on the land were

arguing that a person is either a womyn or trans, you cannot have both identities.

I would love nothing more than not deal with being transgendered but I will not lie about my past. I will not make up stories about being a girl in order to fit in. The fact is, I was born and raised male. I do not feel the need to disclose this to everyone but I will not lie to a person who respectfully asks. When you deny your past, you are allowing other people to say what your past is and from this, who you are now. I will not let fearful and hateful people define who I am.

3) Some intersexed people were arguing that trans activists are appropriating their experiences.

They are right. There are some trans activists that use the example of intersexed people to argue for the inclusion of transgendered people. This bothers me. The rights of the transgendered should stand on its own merit. Using intersexed people as a reason does not show respect for their lives. They are different experiences. We should be allies but this can be alienating.

4) Transgendered womyn still have male privilege, they were born and raised with it and it never leaves.

This is a very complex issue and frankly, beyond the scope of this article. I will not argue against the fact that boys and girls are raised differently (this is a topic that all of us should be worried about). I have spent too much time wondering how different I would be if I was born and raised female. All I can say is I would not be the same womyn I am now.

In a lot of ways, the male privilege is gone. For example, when I am harassed by some man, it is not because I am a womyn who was raised as a man. It is because the man feels it is his right to treat a woman this way. I do not like it but how many womyn do?

Lastly, I just want to point out that the above issue ignores the fact that there are many different routes to privilege.

5) It would just not be the same if the event was not w-b-w.

First of all, CampTrans has moved beyond just getting transgendered womyn onto the land. We are dealing with many different trans identities and quite a few neither male nor female. And the reason why all of these identities are now coming out? Because of the changes that these womyn made by creating their own space and in the process made it easier for a new generation of people to explore gender issues. In other words, they are trying to ignore the changes that they helped to make possible. Sorry that it is not the same and truly, I do thank you for that.

Janine Kelley
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photo: shauna enyart

The Gender Clinic:

I am a trans-lady. I live on Turtle Island also known as Vancouver, BC, Canada. The way it works here in Canada is you go to a doctor or street clinic and get a referral to one of three or four specialized clinics in the country if you want hormones/surgery. I managed to get medical coverage from my province for free because I am poor and I was born here. I am a lucky girl also in that I live in one of the cities that has a clinic. MSP is the Medical services plan that I have (it is the only option because there are no private health insurers in Canada) and this clinic for gender, something and something just serves as an advisory to MSP. So they talk to you, decide that you are fit or unfit to transition and if they think you really are a "transsexual" and then tell MSP to pay for hormones and surgery according to their standards. The clinic has you fill out these forms evaluating your own mental health and social normalizing potential. Then they interview you for an hour or more and ask questions like what made you think you were born in the wrong body, do you have a particular interest in being evil, are you a performer by nature. The funny thing for me is that they are behind the rest of this fucked social world for what they expect in terms of a rigid gender one or the other type expectations. I mean, I really felt pressure to tell them I played sports of the opposite "sex" at one point. I am a survivor of ritual abuse courtesy of a well known cult, Mormons. My first interview with the gender clinic specialists turned into paying homage to my most hated institution after they asked about my family. I thought I wouldn't be able to be consistent in my lies unless I used the mental link to childhood programming a bit. I have known how to hide everything not white, male and rich since four or five because of it. That turned out to be exactly what they wanted. A racist, sexist, uncaringly privileged transsexual. So I lied and they ate it up, and I got to re-live pretending no abuse had happened or was ever going to happen to any one. I also got to tell them that I had a stable job. I am a sex worker who pays for food on a day to day basis according to how much work there is for a feminin-with-dick street worker, but I am also a janitor who can pay rent and hopefully a heat bill when I get paid each month. That is just enough for them to agree with me that I am stable - if I embellish a little and get my employer to write a letter saying Evelyn is a good employee. I probably will get hormones and then surgery eventually, but their standards have longer wait times than the blah blah standards of care. All in all I am a lucky girl, but it sure helps to have community that might want to read an article buy a crazy poor gender fucked perverted survivor of abuse. So that's my brief intro to Canada and getting hormones, and a bit of a coming out for me.

-easy evi.

QuEsTiOn:::HoW dO yOu IdEnTiFy:::

ANsWeR:::

welcome to gender neverland where all the boys are girls and all the girls are boys/people like me are still stuck in a world of language not of this time out of decades ago/where is my revolution/i spend most of my time somewhere in the middle not androgynous at all but out of this world/i haven't been invented yet/i am the third pronoun that actually works the third pronoun that people use/not a combination of two but entirely new/two is never enough and three is .well...not enough/i live in the land of genderfuck and tolerance/i am lost here/i feel obliterated blasted into space there is no room for me in your increasingly masturbatory life / is just the way you never imagined it could be/please put me in a box because there aren't enough to fit into/i know you forget once you've been there how hard it is/please take my hand and fold me inside you as i once did for you/please protect me from the stoning/protect me from the ominous storm of needles and scalpels/a window to my fantasies/i am a young prince in a corset auctioned off as a girl with long nails and a painted smile/i am a whore in a three piece suit with a giant red dick up your ass/does that make you uncomfortable/i'm trying my damndest to make it that way/didn't you know i am here to ::uproot:: ::destroy:: ::deconstruct:: ::create:: ::rebuild:: ::worship::

welcome to my answer:::iMaGiNaTiOn:::gEnDeRqUeEr:::lyndsey [grey] vierra

A Personal Discourse on Gender

Nowadays it seems like almost everyone is discussing the topic of gender, which is a good thing and definite proof that times are changing, not only among the queer population but lots of other political and not-so-political groups. Thing is, I've avoided writing about the topic through all this, even if I've been a member of the queer community for the past four years and an active member in the trans-inclusion and -visibility movement for the past two. I have pushed the subject to the side even if I have so many transgender and transsexual friends, and quite importantly, have so many gender issues myself. Sure, I was classified as female when I was born, assigned a sex just like most everyone else those few moments before my first breath. My parents already knew it while I was in utero, and accordingly configured a rough plan of my gender genesis, my mother especially. Throughout my childhood I struggled with her perception and my perception of who I was; I still do to this very day. The exploration and development of my gender identity is so crucial to me.

The beginning of this gender journey must start with my childhood since many of my characteristic traits were first acquired then. I had the typical tomboy life growing up. My two brothers, one older and the other younger, both greatly contributed to this. I hated dresses and everything I deemed "girly" and fought it out rough and tumble with my brothers and their friends. I had no idea what my life would become because of this, though I did notice the separation between me and the other little girls in the neighborhood. I was just a kid, with my very own ideas about what I liked and disliked, and who I thought I was. I didn't fit in and I really didn't want to fit in, I hung out with my older brother, Erick's friends down the street, jumping on their bed and playing Atari tournaments. My childhood was a perpetual disagreement with my mother; we fought over my taking traditional Korean dance classes and even piano lessons, though she believed this would somehow make me snap out of my tomboy characteristics.

All these childhood memories have faded and I don't know if I just plain forgot them or my mind automatically erased them for lack of toleration. There was so much shit to my childhood - the awkwardness, the debilitating shyness, the repression and rebellion. I grew up quickly and silently and passed out of my lack of friends, of being the only Asian girl in a Catholic elementary school, of watching my family disintegrate and regenerate through what seemed to test only my brothers' and my own sanity. Eventually we left it all and moved to the suburbs when I was seven and there I fully grew up.

The last time I wore a dress was to my high school graduation. My hair was long and I was a perfect shadow of myself at age fourteen, but this time I didn't give a shit. I did it for my parents to show them that I didn't always have to look like a freak. It was more than a year after I came home with a shaved head and the knowledge that I was a dyke. Back then, I reeked of marijuana smoke and stumbled over the power of writing. I was enormously depressed and going through the most revolutionary period of my life. I had no idea about gender but I did have an idea on sexuality, which was the first step in my self-analysis and my own education. I was astounded and devastated - at age sixteen I wanted to die and there were so many facets to my depression and suicidal thoughts, it wasn't just because I was queer and that I grew up thinking it was abnormal and wrong. It wasn't just because I had a dysfunctional family or undeniable and uncontrollable anger or failures in school. It was all those things multiplied by my whole life and the epiphany that I had no fucking idea who I was, or what I believed was right.

My mother and I had almost radically different ideas and lifestyles of what being born female meant. I know it is greatly influenced by our cultural separations: her spending her formative years in Korea and me being born and raised in the United States. I developed a separate ideological and real definition of myself, while she barely moved an inch on her theories of gender roles. Conversely, I do realize that my mother embodied characteristics that were atypical of her ideas of a woman's gender role. For the

nineteen years I've had her as a mother, I have seen her run a number of her own businesses, manage her own apartment building, pay the bills, buy a house, manage my family's money, and send her kids to school without the burdens of student loans. She is not the average American woman, and most certainly she is eons apart from the average Korean woman. My mother is fierce, especially under pressure. She has created and acquired everything my family has today, she embodied characteristics (in complete societal terms) more similar to that of a man than she ever did to that of a woman, though she was still left with the responsibilities of traditional woman's work (housekeeping, cooking, raising her kids, etc.).

Technically speaking, gender is a complete societal construct. No one grows up telling her or him or himself that they must act a particular way according to which genitals they were born with. People are taught and told, force-fed a set of rules on how to act in prescribed masculine and feminine characteristics, whether or not the individual child believes in such things or feels them naturally. Children are, to use a harsh term, brainwashed into rigid gender roles, those of girl and boy, woman and man. This is the way most of the world has functioned (obviously imperfectly) since the beginning of written history. People remain adhered to this way of thinking by historical habit, though recently these constructs have been questioned and challenged by such political groups as the feminists and the gay rights movement. Ideas are slowly, slowly changing and people are learning that gender is a far more significant and ground-breaking issue and pertinent to society as a whole. The capability to understand, tolerate, and eventually accept those with differing personal characteristics from societal norms (i.e., those set down by the rich, white, male ruling class) is more likely than ever to happen, though the process is still arduous and hardly-fought by a very miniscule part of the population. Yet optimistically speaking, this could lead to a change in society's strict definition of gender, and the ultimate realization that gender itself does not exist.

But that's speaking in utopian terms. Realistically, this isn't going to happen anytime soon, surely not in my lifetime. What's going on right now in the world is far from that. The technicalities of gender and the subsequent formation of gender hierarchy (i.e., patriarchy) are still concrete in America and every other "civilized" society today.

Radical notions on gender by all means remain radical and are not adhering to the general society, though toned-down versions of less constraining gender expression are becoming more commonplace, especially among young girls. And yes, the "girl power" movement is surely a step forward, not only for the feminist movement, but also for future generations. Remember *Reviving Ophelia* by Mary Pipher? That book was insanely popular and opened people's eyes to the extreme hardships adolescent girls were going through, and brought the girl power movement to a broader scale. Girls are experiencing more freedom than ever, but there are still existing definitions characterizing what girls should be. Just look at how commercialized girl power has become, how trendy and fashionable it is, and how it has erupted into a perfect marketing niche.

Yet this essay is more an analysis of myself than the way the world is dealing with gender issues, though I remain a gender deviant in today's society. I do admit that what the outside world thinks and perceives rules so much about me. I can't help it; it's a simple fact of life. My own gender identity is a puzzle. I define myself as a girl and woman and feel comfortable being called Ms., her, and she but I also see how much of a boy I am, how these names I call myself do not fit with the rest of the world's definitions. I definitely embody what it means to be transgender, of being in slang terms, genderfucked. But I also feel fine about my body and I like not wearing feminine clothing or makeup or even a bra. I dress in what can be classified as men's clothing and I have a crew cut. To people who adhere to the rules of binary gender (i.e., man and woman and nothing else), I am a freak; a girl who looks like a boy or vice versa, a dyke, a queer, a queer, a who-

Trans TG, Nov

knows-what. I don't have a typical man/woman definition to them. I am in between.

But it seems like everyone I know is in between and trying to understand. Some of my close friends are going through transformations and truly creating themselves to who they've always believed they were and I watch and feel happy for them. They are so courageous to me. But me, I like this body I was born with, the name I was given, the abstract definition of woman and girl. I also like the definition of being a boy-dyke, of being a genderfuck, of understanding the inanity of the old gender system. What my friends and I are trying to do is construct and live by a new system of gender, one that recognizes the wide array of possibilities that gender can be expressed, and how it is not a binary system and completely in the hands of the individual. Gender itself can never be wrong. It is only to be respected and nurtured in its own purpose of self-characterization.

It is not what society tells you who you are, but what you yourself tells who you are. I strongly believe this.

I also recognize the inherent body and self-hatred in today's society. There are so many ways a person can hate his/her/hir's own body, whether it be issues of being fat or thin, different races, and the ever-present male and female body types. It is a bit strange that I do feel so comfortable in my body when so many others do not. Though I may feel awkward at times, I like messing with people's perceptions and watching them double take and suddenly become nervous around me. It happens a lot. I've probably become desensitized to a lot of it, expect certain people to treat me oddly, to try and figure me out. The nervousness among the general population is ever present when it comes to my friends and me. We could be walking down the street, minding our own business, and people stop dead in their tracks, suddenly lost in their own conversations to stare at us, obviously wondering what the hell we are. Sometimes we feel militant that day and stare back and make a comment, other days we ignore them, not wanting to deal with what could happen next.

And there is always that lingering question: what could happen next? My friends and I live under the guise of possibilities of getting beat up, verbally assaulted, chased, publicly harassed, etc. There is always that shroud hanging over us whenever we go out in public. And it fucking sucks, it's terrible, tragic, that we still have to live with fear everyday of our lives just because we are expressing ourselves in a way in which we feel most comfortable.

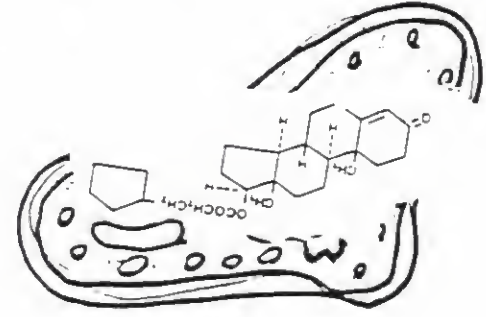
Well, anyway, this is my all over the place personal discourse on gender: what I'm always thinking about and trying to make sense of inside my head. I know I'm going to be thinking about this my whole life and lots of other people are too, and a big part of what I'm trying to do is make *everyone* think about this. This is one of the most important issues relevant to changing and furthering society.

*There are writers, artists, and activists out there who are a lot more eloquent and informed than I am. Look into works by Leslie Feinberg, Kate Bornstein, Hildi Anne Wilchins, Pat Califio, Daphne Schallinski, Anne Fausto-Sterling, Loren Cameron, and many more...

FROM
Seemingly
azine by
LINDA-0H

PROPERTY!

Boys and Boyz - WELCOME to



Depo-Testosterone
(testosterone cypionate sterile solution, USP)
Got a voice like Barry White

STRAANGE Things are Abrew at the cellular level...

TEE-TEE (this is what my parents say instead of "piss")

SOME VOCAB:
TRANS TRANNY TRANSGENDER: People that don't want to be in the M or F gender system
T-Boy: TMs or Boyz who are trans. (Also Boy, Boyz, trannyboy, trannyboyz)
Raoster: Boyz who like boys.
Bio: "Biological" gender, people who identify by their "given" sex.
Heteros: People I don't like usually heterosaxuals who don't understand that the whole world ain't let + white. Some guys fit this category. We will call as in the HRC is a bounchy heteros that like to butt-fuck.

Canadians are really cool. So sorry that I thought otherwise. at one point, at least.

WHY T P.
T for Transgender, T for mans-school, T for Transgressing, T for Transferring, T for Transmissions, T for testosterone, T for testicles, T for terrorists, T for timid, T for trouble, T for tacky, T for tasty, T for tickle, T for trains, T for type (duct), T for tongue, T for transmutate, T for ticked off, T for the man, T for themselves, T for thanks, T for pros-the-sis, T for Timmy, T for too short, T for trucks, T for the same, T for tranny boy

I AM THE ONLY BOY IN THE WORLD



LONELY? HERE SOME TIPS FOR FINDING OTHER
FTMS AND Transpeople*:

NON ① Get out: Go to queer events, rallies, even Pride (if you must.)
TOO ② Look in the Queer papers for trans-inclusive events. If
the T is specified, there is a pretty good chance you'll
find a T-person there.

Tree ③ Locate Trans groups. Look in the Queer papers, or if you
can't find any - go onto the Net. Search for anything
related to transpeople. (If you don't have a computer, the
LIBRARY does). If you can't find anything in your
area, contact someone from one of the bigger groups,
like FTM International. We are a fairly small minority,
so it's highly likely that the contact can put you
in touch with other transpeople or groups in your
area.

FOR ④ If you live in a rural area, find activities in the nearest
big city chances are, though, that you'll find other transpeople
in your little town's only gay bar (located way out in
the woods somewhere.) There are less divisions amongst queer
when there are fewer queers, so they all tend to congreg
in the same place.

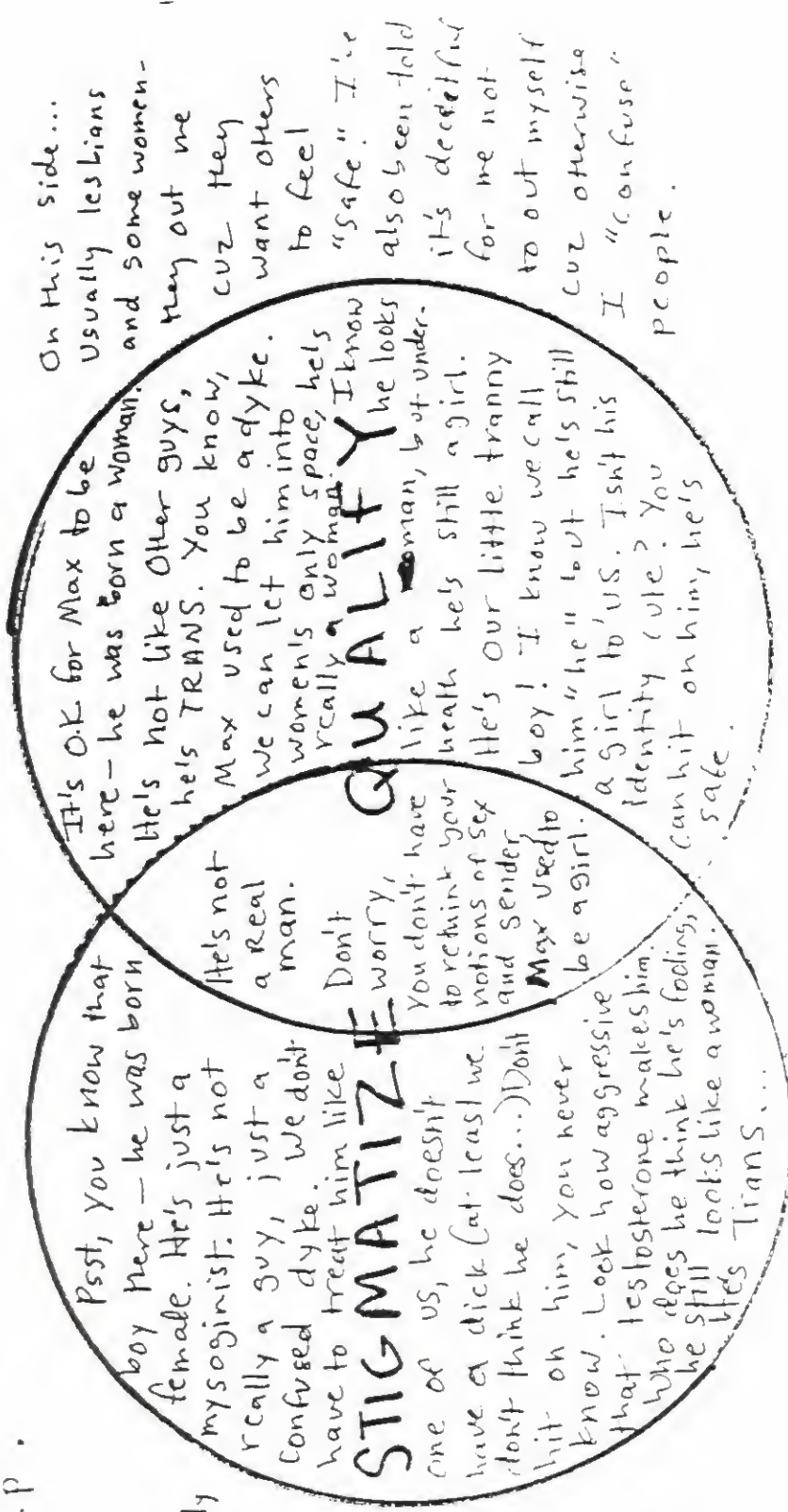
IFE ⑤ My pal Anne Tagonist has a cool trick for meeting transpeople
in public without outing them: Say you see what seems to be
a transperson (in this example - let's say an FTM). On your bus.
If you wanna approach them to find out for SURE (and make
friend), casually walk up and say: "Hey, I think we may take
the same Vitamin T." If they are FTM, they'll probably set
your line. If they're not, they'll just think you're a little
nuts. Either way, you can use this as a cool secret-code
language - type communication without exposing or endangering
anyone or outing anyone or yourself against their/your will.
*Also, take out your list of friends and...

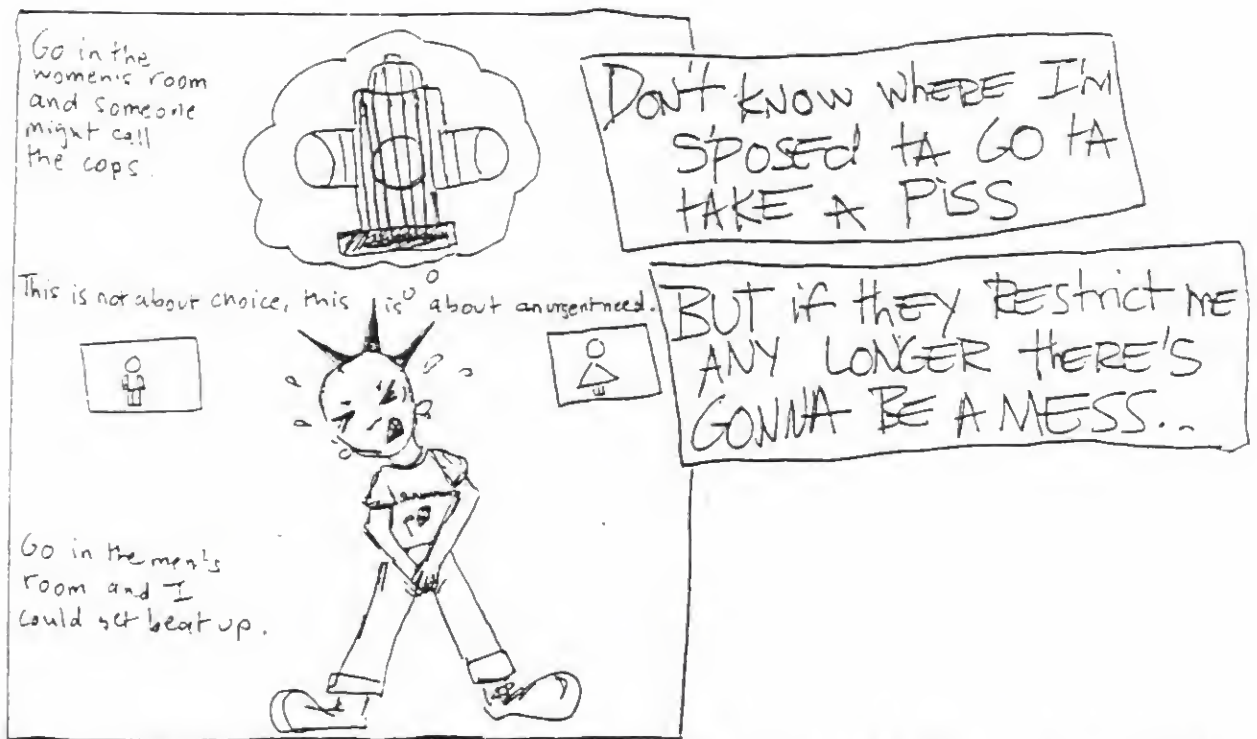
Why Do You Need to Out ME?

It's important for me to be out as Trans for Political reasons, but I wanna OUT MYSELF. When other people out me, their intentions are not always positive. I've noticed that many people feel they need to Out me, and I have analyzed this need and broken down their reasons into two categories, some of which

Overlap:

On this side...
Some fags and lesbians and usually the WHOLE WORLD. These people wanna set me apart from the rest of the world, belittle me and otherwise out me so that I am unhappy and so they can feel like they're divulging some big secret.





SINGLE - PERSON NON-GENDERED BATHROOMS RULE!

- ① They make it safe for me to do my business.
- ② They make it possible for genderqueers and polysgendered people to do their business.
- ③ They usually smell better
- ④ They're private as hell - you can make all sorts of noises.
- ⑤ You can set it on in 'em.
- ⑥ They don't assume that girls wear triangle dresses like the Ladies Bathroom signs do.
- ⑦ You can talk to yourself in 'em.
- ⑧ You can stink 'em up and not feel stupid.

If You Visit Someplace (a library, skool, restaurant, etc) and they HAVE SINGLE - PERSON Non-Gendered BATHROOMS, express your THANKS to the MANAGEMENT! well, how else are they gonna know how great your life is because you can finally piss in peace?

If you're in college, lots of skools will provide these bathrooms if you demand them.

M2B

by Kylie Paintain

"MtB? What's that?"

Most people have heard of male to female (MtF) transsexuals and even lesbian transsexuals but male to butch (MtB) is something new entirely for many. Those who have a problem with MtF transsexuals identifying as a lesbian.....

"Why go through all the mtf stuff and then id as lesbian?"

.....are usually stuck at the misconception that transitioning is all about who you want to have sex with. So an mtf who chooses to identify as butch will be particularly strange for them.

"Don't women who identify as butch really want to be men?"

I think "identifying as a butch woman" really says it all 'specially the woman bit. For me, and others like me, butch is very separate from male. I id very strongly as female and see female/woman as my gender identity and my butch identity is an extension of this. I think you can display masculine traits/characteristics without being/iding as male or without losing any sense of being female/woman.

When I transitioned 8-9 years ago there was an awful lot of pressure for me to conform to a very stereotypical female image and role ie Het Barbie. I tried to do this - I didn't really see any other options at this stage - but it just didn't feel right so I set out to find out what was right for me. This took about 6 yrs during which time I was totally celibate. It was a difficult time as I had to come to terms with a lot of stuff about myself that I didn't like but I

think I am a better person for it.

I came out as a dyke about 4 yrs ago but all the dykes I knew were andro-dykes so while I had taken a major step in the right direction I still wasn't feeling right about me and who I was. It wasn't until someone suggested I read some books on butch/fem that I realised how I fitted in. It was amazing to read about women who felt a lot like I do - who id strongly as women but acknowledge their masculine side in a positive way.

It hasn't exactly been easy - being out as a transsexual and iding as butch has caused a few problems but I figure if people have a problem with this concept and don't have the courage to talk to me in person about it then it remains their

problem and not mine. While I try to be as available as possible for people to talk to - I believe that it is only through talking about these issues that we will start to resolve some of them - I don't believe in forcing my opinions on anyone. I try to respect other peoples choices in their lives and only ask the same from others.

After all why should our individual expressions of gender be forced into conforming to what makes others feel safe or comfortable? Why can't we express our selves, our inner feelings, without being made to feel like freaks and misfits? Why does there have to be such strict regulation of gender in a society that seems to be willing to let other

Cont. on page 22

Kylie lives in Melbourne Australia with her gorgeous fem partner and her kind of gorgeous m/bike (still waiting on some money to fix it up a bit more). The queers think Kylie's "really" het and the hets think she's REALLY queer.



se. Ma
alendar. She
destroy everything
look that didn't bother.

aked away.

M2B, cont. from Page 15

things grow?

Until very recently transsexuals were supposed to disappear once they had "successfully" transitioned but now there are a growing number of us who will not disappear, who will not shut up about gender and who will not bend over backwards to make Joe and Jill Citizen feel comfortable.

I strongly believe that the best way for me to be happy and reach my full potential is to be the best me that I can be. If that means distorting other peoples safe views on what is gender then so be it..



for security purposes

we'll need to have a
copy of your new
driver's license and a
copy of the court
papers to verify
your name change.



in order to have my chance to
explain my life before others
jump to conclusions

in order to have any recognition of my
attempts as of yet to map out
my life for it's own purpose

in order to let people know the
seriousness of my actions
in order to escape the word **trendy**
or any accusations of

bandwagon jumping

because in order to be who and what
i want to be

in order to be perceived by others
in accordance to how i feel

in order to have others appreciate me
for how i want to be rather than
how they want me to be

in order to have any hope of being
understood as something or some-
one other than a **stereotype** based
on rash first impressions

i need to have papers filled out by
courts, signed by judges, stamped
by clerks

i need a court to tell me that it is
okay to live the way i want to
i need a doctor to tell me that i'm not
crazy for wanting to stay true to
myself

i need a letter from that doctor to give
to another doctor just so i can
get a prescription

i need that doctor to say it's okay for
me to alter myself in such a
way that may confuse others,
trick others, and convince others
that i am different and i am
changing

that they don't know what they think i am
that i am indeed different from who
and what i used to be
that i am indeed new and evolved

a phoenix rising from the ashes of
boundaries and borders set on
trapping and killing any and
all who dare to fly.

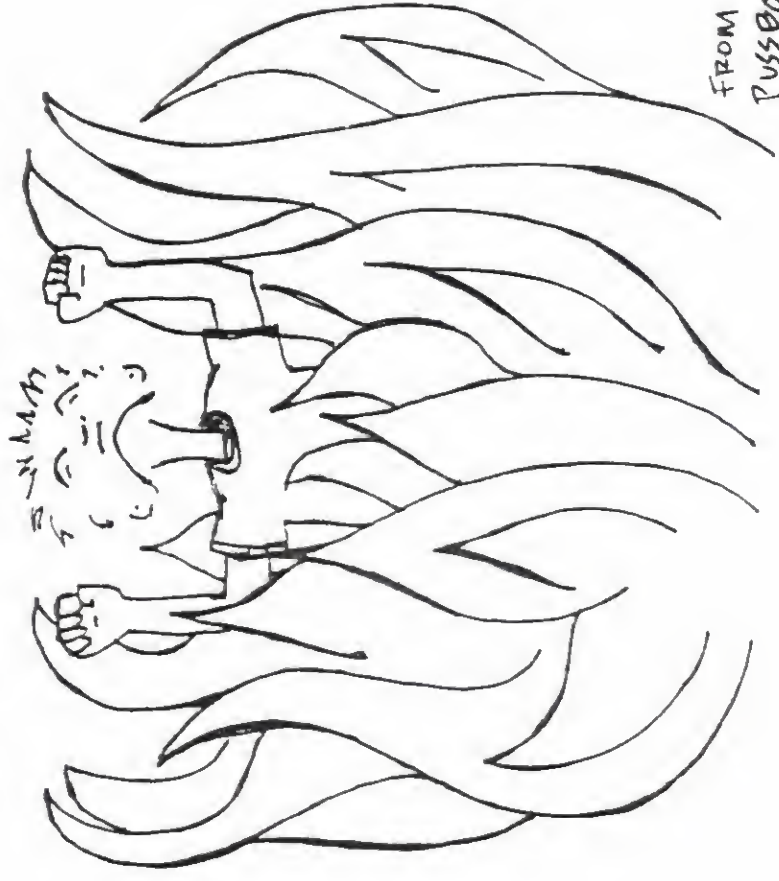
but, i am flying and changing and
creating and evolving into new
and unused and uncharted
territory

because i have never been to this
land before and my wings have
never kissed this wind before

my flames are eternal and no a
of name calling and accusations
statements will put that, my
band wagons and trends aside,
own wings have gotten me
this place

and how dare you think that you
can douse my flames with your
thick tongue and harsh words

how dare you think you can stop
me from rising. ✱



FROM
Pussboy
#3

Camp trans was complete chaos. Are you surprised? Our protests were unreal and I am now confronted with some harsh realities about women and the lesbian community as a whole. We had three direct actions. The final one ended with several of us, including me, getting forced off the land.

The camp trans crew walked into MWMF on Saturday. We entered the dining area and some of us held up signs that said things like, "boy-dyke," "fag top," "F 2 boy," "trans women," and so on... they held a silent protest while the rest of us joined in and handed out info and stickers in support of our cause. About 70 of us stood there, holding a silent protest in the middle of the dining area. On lookers surrounded us, some smiled, gave us a thumbs up, others yelled at us in anger and frustration.

After an hour or so we declared that if MWMF was not responding to our protest that equaled that they supported us and would allow trannies on the land... We yelled our identities out loud and announced that we were now accepted.

However in reality that wasn't enough. The MWMF workers were snickering at us and we felt a sense of defeat. So all of us we confronted security. They forced each of us to tell them our identities. We demanded to know if we were allowed on the land or not. Finally, one by one we were forced to leave. I came out as a transsexual womyn (even though I am not). The womyn who was confronting me asked me to leave. I had to argue with her about 5 minutes that she either had to tell me to leave (not ask) because I would not leave voluntarily. Finally with tears streaming down my own face she said, "fine, I am telling you to leave."

I pushed away to where they were holding us, waiting for an escort off the land. When everyone finished self-identifying we were walked off the land. Those of us who were being kicked off for our identities chanted, "I am being forced to leave." Meanwhile, our supporters behind us screamed out things in support, telling our story, explaining who we were.

The thing that pissed me off is that the escorts turned around to yell at us and change their story three or four different times. They kept mixing up there own words. Using "we asked you to leave, and you are leaving voluntarily," instead of, "we are telling you to leave..." And, "we're kicking you off for being transsexual not trans gendered," so we would have to stop and explain we are not leaving voluntary, and argue...

When we arrived at the gate after the grueling walk of festies yelling at us to "give it up," we saw our friends on the other side at camp trans waiting for us, cheering. Those of us who were forced off the land were asked to turn in our bracelets. I ripped mine off and threw it on the ground and ran across the street to my friends.

I can't believe my own fucking community rejected me! argh...

I am sorry this is so long. I could go on for pages about my anger... I'll save you the reading time.

8 of us were actually removed. Hearing the individual stories is amazing. Seeing my best friends in tears is painful.

www.angel-fire.com/emo/joshisahottie